

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 04245 272137Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
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P 271607Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2545

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 4245

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

ONLY FOR NEA/ARN DRAPER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PBOR, US, JO, XF
SUBJECT: JORDAN AID FOR FY 79

REF: STATE 174659

1. MUCH RELIEVED TO GET REFTEL AND THE FURTHER
EXPLANATION IT PROVIDES OF THE PROCESS.
2. I AGREE FULLY WITH STRATEGY OF DEVOTING
OUR REGULAR PROGRAM NOW TO POTASH, BUDGET SUPPORT,
AMMAN WATER, ETC. (PARA 4 REFTEL).
3. RE MAQARIN, THERE ARE VARIOUS REASONS WHY I
THINK IT IS WORTH MAKING A SPECIAL EFFORT TO
PRESENT A REGIONAL PROJECT FOR FUNDING IN FY 1979.
THE FIRST IS THAT THE PROJECT MAKES SENSE IN
DEVELOPMENT TERMS AND DELAY IN STARTING IT MERELY
DELAYS THE ECONOMIC PAY-OFF FROM IT. THE SECOND
REASON IS THAT THERE IS MOMENTUM BEHIND THE
PROJECT NOW, AFTER THE MEETINGS THAT HAVE BEEN
HELD WITH OTHER POTENTIAL DONORS, AND IT WOULD
BE A SHAME TO LOSE THEIR INTEREST. THE THIRD
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REASON IS THAT FORWARD MOVEMENT ON MAQARIN NOW
TENDS TO SMOKE OUT ISRAELI POLITICAL ATTITUDES.
ALSO, THE PROSPECT OF BUILDING THE DIVERSION
WEIR IN 1978, AS PART OF THE PROJECT, WILL CONFER
SHORT TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS AS A DIRECT RESULT
OF SOME POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION BY BOTH SIDES
NOW.

4. THE MAQARIN PROJECT, AS YOU POINT OUT, WILL HAVE TO BE MULTI-YEAR FUNDED WHENEVER IT IS DONE AND CONCEPTUALLY SHOULD BE A REGIONAL PROJECT RATHER THAN BILATERAL. THERE ARE, THEREFORE, NO ADVANTAGES IN POSTPONING IT TO ANOTHER FISCAL YEAR. SUPPLEMENTAL REQUESTS ALWAYS ENCOUNTER TOUGHER SLEDDING ON THE HILL THAN THE REGULAR ANNUAL AID SUBMISSION AND I WOULD THINK THAT TACTICALLY IT WOULD BE EASIER TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL IF IT WERE INCLUDED AS A REGIONAL PROJECT IN THE FY 79 CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION.

5. WHILE I KNOW SAM LEWIS HAS JUST GOTTEN BACK TO TEL AVIV, AN EARLY READING ON ISRAELI REACTION TO THE WATER RIGHTS PAPER WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT. ASSUME DEPARTMENT CAN REVIEW JORDAN'S CHANGES EXPEDITIOUSLY AND GIVE TEL AVIV GREEN LIGHT TO DISCUSS THIS. ECONOMIC AID SIDE IS MOVING INEXORABLY FORWARD AND I DO NOT BELIEVE POLITICAL ISSUE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DRAG ANY FURTHER. WE WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION WHERE WE WOULD HAVE TO HOLD UP FUNDING DECISION OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE UNTIL POLITICAL ISSUES THRASHED OUT. I TOO SHARE SOME CONCERN OVER BEGIN GOVERNMENT

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REACTION AND BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST TO TALK TO THEM AS SOON AS WE CAN WHILE THEIR INCLINATION TO BE FAIRLY CONSTRUCTIVE CONTINUES.

6. I WILL INDEED DISCUSS THIS FURTHER WITH ATHERTON AND HABIB. MY ONE QUESTION IS WHETHER IT IS ALSO NOT A GOOD IDEA TO RAISE REGIONAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION NOW. WAITING FOR PEACE AND A SUPPLEMENTAL IS PRETTY THIN STUFF TO BASE ALL OF THIS ON AND MAQARIN IS NOT LINKED TO PEACE, BUT MORE DIRECTLY TO ISRAELI ATTITUDE WHICH WE SHOULD TRY TO SMOKE OUT SOON.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: EARLY DEPARTMENT GREEN LIGHT ON JORDANIAN REVISION OF WATER RIGHTS MEMO AND EARLIEST PRESENTATION TO ISRAELIS. I WOULD LIKE TO SEND SOMEONE OVER TO BE PRESENT WHEN IT IS DONE, IF IT WILL BE DONE TO USUAL ISRAELI GROUP. WE MIGHT THINK ALSO ABOUT HIGHER LEVEL PITCH FROM SAM LEWIS TO DAYAN OR BEGIN TO BACK IT UP. SECONDLY, WE SHOULD GIVE MORE THOUGHT TO THE IDEA OF TRYING TO WORK OUT THE NOTION OF A REGIONAL

PROJECT NOW IN THE REGULAR FY 79 BUDGET IF ISRAELIS
DO NOT OBJECT TO WATER RIGHTS PAPER OR IF THEIR
OBJECTIONS CAN BE OVERCOME REASONABLY EARLY.
PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BUDGETS, POLICIES, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS, MAQARIN DAM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977AMMAN04245
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770269-0495
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770716/aaaaanfh.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 830e8663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 77 STATE 174659
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1740501
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JORDAN AID FOR FY 79
TAGS: EAID, PBOR, US, JO, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/830e8663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009